

# ponderings



Newsletter of the Moonee Ponds Creek Co-ordination Committee PO BOX 2170 Greenvale 3059  
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## Co-ordinator's ramblings .

**Welcome** to the second edition of the Moonee Ponds Creek Newsletter. There have been many changes for the committee this year, the biggest being our incorporation and the consequential move out of the auspices of Hume City Council. Finding new premises proved to be a challenge for us but we have found a location which finds us much closer to the creek. We are now based at Woodlands Historic Park, on the northern fringe of Melbourne but only 20 minutes drive from Melbourne's CBD. Those of you who know Woodlands will agree that it's a beautiful place to work. There aren't many work environments where you can see parrots, wrens and wedge tailed eagles on the drive into the carpark! Having depot space also gives the committee scope to expand and continue to fulfill our goals – in the long term the development of a dedicated on ground works crew. All our new contact details may be found at the top of this page – we look forward to hearing from you with any creek issues you may have.

Another first for the committee this year was taking on the running of the MPC greening program for the spring season. Armed with a new planting trailer & tools, courtesy of a Parks Victoria grant, we hosted over ten community and school planting days. It was fantastic to meet so many enthusiastic community members who are just as passionate about the creek as we are. For a full report on the planting activities for this year, turn to page 2 of the newsletter.

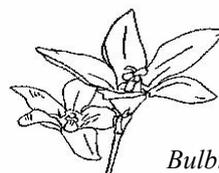
By now most of you will have heard of the departure of Gavan O'Neill to greener pastures earlier this year (Gavan is now working as Kelvin Thomson's advisor). Gavan was the first Moonee Ponds Creek Co-ordinator, a role he held for three years from the committee's incep-

tion to early this year. Gavan's reputation as an enthusiastic advocate for the creek ensures that he is missed by all but he still manages to have his say as a fully paid up member of the Friends of MPC.

The committee is in the final stages of developing it's new combined brochure & poster, which will promote the creek and the activities of the committee. We will be sending out a copy of finished brochure with the next newsletter, due in Autumn 2003. For a sneak preview, check out the inaugural Creeky Christmas invite enclosed with this newsletter. Another new project we are working on is the development of our new website. This is an exciting partnership between Employment Focus and the MPCCC, where we will be assisted by a small team participating in a back-to-work scheme. Our new website, [www.mpccc.org](http://www.mpccc.org), will be taking shape over the next six months.

It's been an eventful year for the committee, one filled with many challenges. With so many changes occurring, we look forward to settling down in our new home and getting on with the job of protecting, promoting and enhancing the creek in the new year. Come & see our new home at our Christmas & Depot warming party on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December (see enclosed invite). It would be great to see you there.

Regards,  
*Melanie Taube*  
Acting Moonee Ponds Creek Co-ordinator



*Bulbine bulbosa*

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## Points of Interest

- *Living Waters, Living Communities*
- *Frogwatch & Waterwatch*
- *Summer Sightings*

## Upcoming Events

- *Depot warming and Christmas Party*
- *Moonee Valley Totems Project*
- *Autumn Planting Season*



# Creek Communities & Every year

hundreds of community members give their free time to improving their patch of Moonee Ponds Creek. This year our community greening program assisted 460 volunteers to plant 10,150 indigenous tubestock. A big change for us this year was the running of the program in-house. Armed with our new trailer we embarked on a Spring's worth of weekend planting and discovered many parts of the creek we didn't know too well. We met many lovely volunteers who had plenty to say about what is and should be happening along the creek. One of our highlights was the inaugural planting of the newly formed Friends of Jacana Wetlands - thanks to Andrew, Leanne & Lily & the local and Gowanbrae residents who turned up at the Jacana planting to lend their support. We look forward to seeing more new Friends groups starting up along the creek in the coming years.

Another highlight was our bumper planting along the banks of the creek at Westmeadows. This event launched our spring season & was part of Planet Ark's National Tree Day. Over a hundred people, including Simon Crean, attended, planting over 1000 tubestock. Thanks to the local Roxburgh Park Lions Club, who organised the BBQ for us.

*It's been an inspiration working with you all!*



**BELOW** Gabrielle and Bob contemplate their hard work at Bent Street, Kensington while Pete sweats it out in the background.



**LEFT** David and Jacinta improve their patch at Gowanbrae.

**RIGHT** Stack 'em Zac!





# Connections



**ABOVE** Christening the new trailer!



## A special thank you

goes to Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek member **Bob Steadman** (above), who accompanied us on nearly all our plantings this year and continues to tirelessly water our new plantings throughout the year. Thank you Bob, your efforts are truly appreciated.



**LEFT** Local Jacana & Gowanbrae residents along the Creek near Jacana wetlands



**RIGHT** A Gardiner team effort

Thanks to the Friends of Upper Moonee Ponds Creek, FO Attwood Creek and FO the Grass Trigger Plant who also planted in the Moonee Ponds Creek catchment. They were ably assisted by Hume City Council. Thanks also to our many sponsors; Parks Victoria, Transurban CityLink, Melbourne Ports Corp, Docklands Authority, Ford Employees Charitable Contribution Scheme, Melbourne Water and Hume, Moonee Valley & Moreland City Councils.

## Groups who assisted in this year's efforts:

- Oak Park Primary School
- Gladstone Views Primary School
- Strathmore North Primary School
- Brunswick Secondary College
- Penola Secondary College
- Ford HR Department
- Local Debney Park residents
- Local Bent Street Kensington residents
- Local Bass Street Oak Park residents
- Local Gowanbrae residents
- Local Westmeadows residents
- FO Jacana Wetlands
- FO Sacred Kingfisher



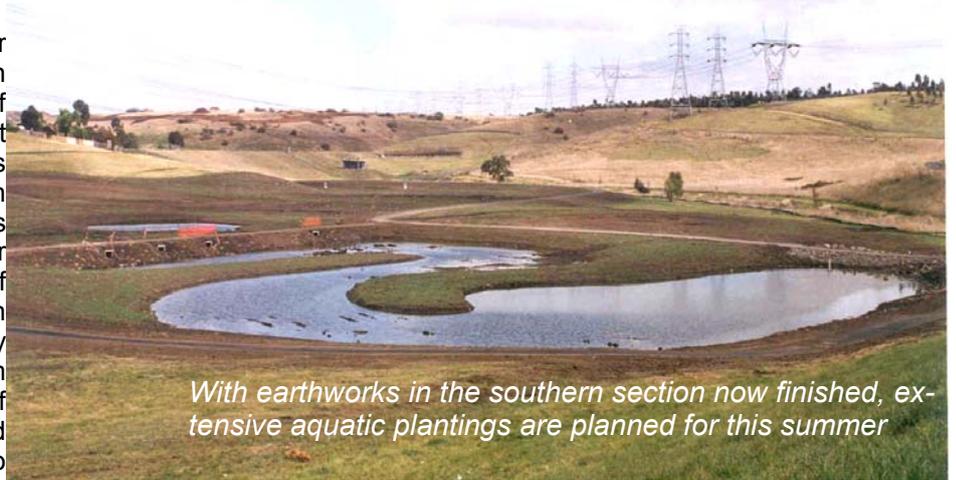
**LEFT** Gowanbrae Boys



**RIGHT** The Ford IT department flex some muscle at Jacana

# Jacana Wetlands

Many of you may have noticed a major landscape change that has slowly been taking place in the creek valley south of the Western Ring Road. For a major part of the year earthwork construction has been undertaken on the new southern wetlands system at Jacana. The works are the beginnings of a \$2.1 million litter trapping and wetland system as part of the Moonee Ponds Creek - Keep It Clean project and Melbourne Water's Healthy Bay Initiative. The new wetland system will treat approximately 200 hectares of runoff from the Broadmeadows area and is expected to reduce nitrogen loads into the Bay by more than two tonnes per year.



*With earthworks in the southern section now finished, extensive aquatic plantings are planned for this summer*

The works mainly involve reshaping of the floor of the retarding basin into a series of shallow pools. This will be done with large earthmoving equipment. Inlet and outlet structures will also be built to transfer water between different 'treatment cells' as well as a concrete pipe constructed to transfer water from the northern side of the Western Ring Road (where the existing drain is) to the southern section of the wetlands.

So how will the wetland system work? Water will firstly pass through a litter trap to remove rubbish such as plastic bottles, and bags. It will then flow through a series of deep pools that will slow the water and allow coarse sediment to drop to the bottom. Finally, water will be transferred to

the south side of the Western Ring Road into a shallow vegetated wetland system that will filter fine sediments before it returns to Moonee Ponds Creek in a much-improved state.

Construction of the extensive northern section of the wetlands is due to begin early in the new year between the Ring Rd and Johnstone Street, Broadmeadows.

The wetlands system is an exciting development in this section of the creek, providing extensive wildlife habitat and returning the creek system to a more naturalistic state in the northern section. As it develops it will become a major recreational and environmental asset for the local community. In recognition of this, Moreland City Council are in the early stages of developing a

complement the wetlands have been allocated for this financial year. Works may include the developments outlined for this space in Moreland's new Restoring Places Strategy.

*For more information on the Jacana Wetlands project, contact Raffaella*

*Crupi at Melbourne Water on 9235 7100*

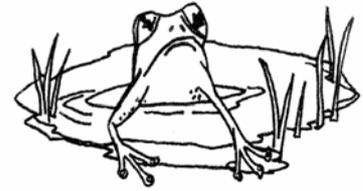
*For more information on the development of the Jacana Wetlands master-plan, contact Leanne O'Shea at Moreland City Council on 9240 1111*

## Frogwatch & Waterwatch

**So what's it all about Alfie?** Waterwatch is a national program which supports local community groups to monitor the health of their local waterways. They provide valuable information, which contributes to the protection and management of their waterways and catchments. As for Frogwatch, frogs and toads also have a special role to play in keeping the environment healthy. Perhaps because they live "on the edge" between water and land, and have semi-permeable skin, frogs and toads are very sensitive to pollution and other environmental changes. Worldwide, many species are declining in large numbers or have recently become extinct. Monitoring frog and toad populations is one way to check the health of wetland areas. Frogs and toads can be used as indicator species, because they are vulnerable to changes in the atmosphere, the land, or the water.



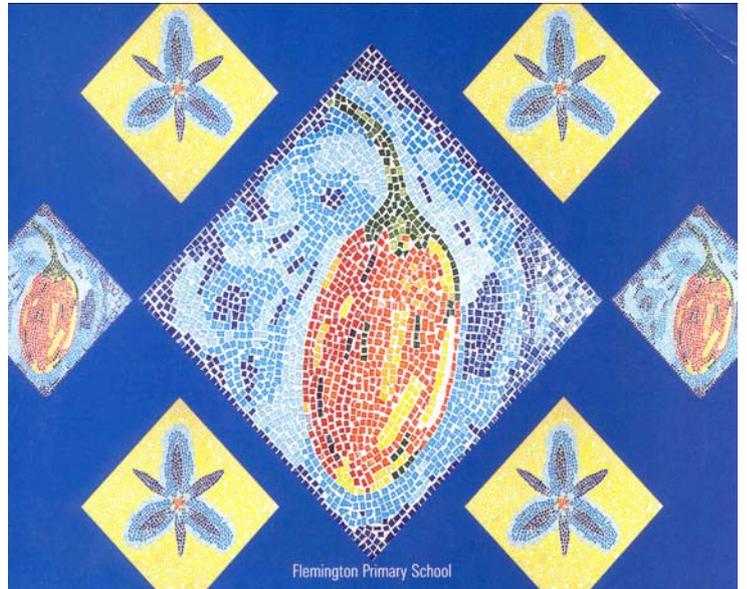
We are calling for expressions of interest from local communities, groups or individuals who want to take part in the development of ongoing local Waterwatch or Frogwatch programs. Our aim is to establish regular consistent monitoring of water health and frog numbers for the length of the Moonee Ponds Creek. We are currently seeking sponsorship which will fund a position to co-ordinate these activities and would like to hear from anyone who may be interested in participating in a pilot program. Merri Creek Management Committee are currently running some Waterwatch activities in the Moonee Ponds Creek catchment; for more information check out their website [www.mcmc.org.au](http://www.mcmc.org.au). For more information about Waterwatch in Victoria, go to [www.vic.waterwatch.org.au](http://www.vic.waterwatch.org.au). Other relevant websites for Frogwatch include [www.frogs.melbournewater.com.au](http://www.frogs.melbournewater.com.au) & [www.frogs.org.au](http://www.frogs.org.au).



# Delhi Reserve Artworks

**The local flora** of the Moonee Ponds creek has inspired a number of artworks which now adorn the noise wall at Delhi Reserve in Delhi Court Flemington. The artworks, which have been hanging in the Public Gallery space since the end of June, really enhance the profile of the creek and its environs. Although the wall is tucked away behind the busy freeway the artwork has created a colourful atmosphere for the many walkers, cyclists and residents passing through the reserve.

Artist Penny Algar was commissioned by the City of Moonee Valley to co-ordinate the City Link funded community arts project. Under Penny's guidance 60 young students from Debney Park Secondary, Flemington Primary School, Debney Meadows Primary School and Moonee Ponds Central School worked together to produce a series of mosaic panels. The panels depict colourful representations of indigenous plants including: Yam Daisies, Running Postman,



**A series of postcards have been produced (above & below) depicting some of the artworks on display at the Public Art Gallery in Delhi Reserve**

Lomandra, Eucalypts, Kangaroo Apple, Flax Lily, and Banksia.

The project has been a very successful and rewarding partnership for all those involved. It is a great example of how artwork can enhance public spaces and reconnect people of all ages with the natural values of an area. Sadly the section of the Moonee Ponds Creek which runs adjacent to the reserve is lined in concrete and has been blocked from view by the noise wall. However, Penny's designs and the hard work of the students have brought vibrant images of the creek back into the park.



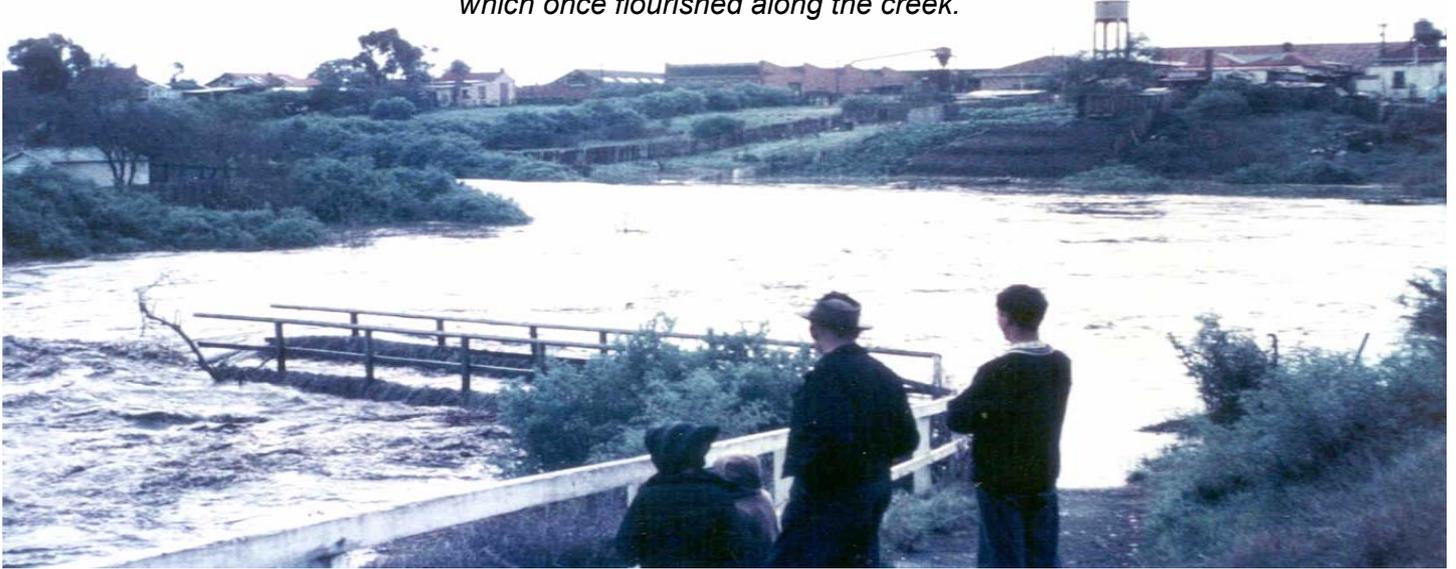
## Living Waters - Living Communities

Living Waters is a new waterways initiative funded by Yarra, Darebin, Hume, Moreland and Whittlesea City Councils in conjunction with the Victorian Government through its Stormwater Action Program. Residents in these areas can learn how to help keep their waterways clean and healthy places which we all want to visit and recreate along. "It's about learning how through everyday actions we can make a difference," Merri Creek Management Committee project officer De Grebner said. Small amounts of oil, grass clippings and plastic bags do more damage to water supplies than most people would imagine, she said. Living Waters will involve training in sustainable living. The primary focus is preventing pollution of our waterways from the stresses of our everyday actions. The initial training will run over two weekends, and then participants will be able to go to a second stage and eventually lead up to ten others in community "eco-teams". The Living Waters program is empowering, fun and important and everyone is encouraged to get involved.

For more information contact Project Officer, De Grebner at [livingwaters@mcmc.org.au](mailto:livingwaters@mcmc.org.au) or phone 9380 8199.

# The way we were...

*Moonee Ponds Creek ain't what it used to be...so what was it like? Elaine Brogan recalls the deep flowing waters and abundance of wildlife which once flourished along the creek.*



*The Creek in Flood—Hope Street, West Brunswick (date unknown) Photo courtesy of AudreyBiggs*

**Ever wondered why** so little remnant vegetation remains along the Moonee Ponds Creek? The bare banks we see today are the result of a long history of inappropriate land use and development. Before the concrete drains of the sixties, land adjoining the creek was leased to Cobb & Co. for grazing. Large blocks were also given to early settlers, who were encouraged to clear their land and keep a small amount of stock. The Creek soon became a watering hole for these animals who trampled vegetation and destroyed native habitat.

Elaine Brogan a longtime resident of Strathmore recalls:

*" I have many fond memories of a once beautiful and free flowing stream, full of black fish and very fresh water. A habitat for many creatures. It's hard to imagine the creek today as the one I have described. History has it that there were...sandbars with swimming holes. A raging wall of water from Lebanon Park and half way up Melissa St Strathmore. A fun place for my children to run and kick about in.*

*My interest in the creek began almost thirty years ago when I took it upon myself to clean-up a lovely waterway that was becoming a dirty dumping drain. The Moonee Ponds Creek was a deep flowing waterway, used for a variety of uses; one was to exercise horses that were ridden to the Flemington Racetrack for events. A watering hole for stock and early land owners. When people ask where I live I can truly say 'on Cobb & Co grazing land'.*

*The Peck Family lived and farmed along this creek. Their famous home 'Lebanon' can still be seen today, sitting prominently on the hill surrounded by post WW2 housing. This creek was vital to all creatures and I dare say that in the years ahead, it may again be the beautiful clean stream with plenty of life."*

**The current creek environment is a poor indication of**

the dynamic waterway it once was. However, the processes which have contributed to its decline have occurred over a comparatively short period of time (200 years). This means a relatively accurate history of the way things were can still be recorded. People like Elaine, who grew up along the creek have invaluable memories to share, which will eventually be lost over time. We are slowly beginning to piece together the history of the Moonee Ponds Creek using written, pictorial and verbal accounts. This information will help communicate the role and importance of the creek as a waterway, not a drain, in the eyes of the community. We aim to do this through the development of interpretation signage and activities along the creek. Your stories will enable us to create a more vivid picture of what the creek used to be like and what we can work towards creating in the future.

*We would love to collect any information, stories or photos you may have about the history of the Moonee Ponds Creek. (Any photos will be reproduced at our cost). Please contact us on 9333 2406 or e-mail us at [info@mpccc.org](mailto:info@mpccc.org)*



*Dawson St Bridge over Moonee Ponds Creek 1926*

## What is the MPCCC?

The Moonee Ponds Creek Co-ordination Committee (MPCCC), founded in February 1998, works together with representatives from each of the four councils (one councillor and one council officer) that front the Moonee Ponds Creek (Hume, Moreland, Moonee Valley and Melbourne), the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek and Melbourne Water.

The MPCCC undertakes such roles as:

- Monitoring planning controls and activities along the Moonee Ponds Creek to ensure environmental protection and ecologically sensitive development of the Moonee Ponds Creek.
- Engaging direct community participation in creek restoration activities, public education programs, resource sharing and information exchange.
- Preserving and restoring the creek and adjoining catchment areas through the Moonee Ponds Creek Community Greening Program and related initiatives.
- Ensuring public ownership of natural assets and appropriate uses of parklands.
- Facilitating the development of guidelines and policies aimed at protecting and enhancing Creek and tributaries.

## MCMC & DCMC

The Merri Creek Management Committee and Darebin Creek Management Committee are also working hard to undertake similar activities in their respective catchments. They would be more than happy to provide you with any information about their work and upcoming participation events.

### Contact:

Merri Creek Management Committee,  
8 Lee Street, East Brunswick PH:  
9380 8199

Darebin Creek Management Committee,  
PO Box 5093 Alphington 3078.  
PH/Fax: 9499 4454

# Tranceplant



**It was a sunny Saturday** in July and the creek banks were alive with hundreds of eager hands scraping back the mulch, tilling the soil and planting thousands of tiny native plants. What brought almost 300 volunteers out to Westmeadows to undertake a massive revegetation project? *Tranceplant*.

Tranceplant is an incorporated non-profit association of young artists and environmental volunteers that combines revegetation work with music and entertainment. The format of the event is usually a mass tree planting in a designated location followed by a dance party, to which all participants are invited for free. Over the past three years, Tranceplant has planted nearly 100,000 trees in regional Victoria.

This year Melbourne Water, Friends of Upper Moonee Ponds Creek, MPCCC and Tranceplant hosted Melbourne's first urban Tranceplant event at the Wright Street Basin in Westmeadows. Melbourne Water and Hume City Council committed \$40,000 to the festival, which included site preparation, plants and site maintenance.

Large mulched beds were prepared along the creek and escarpment and water trucks, plants, gloves and tools were provided. At 9am the first helpers arrived. Music played throughout the day on a solar and wind-powered sound system and hot soups were served up for all the hard workers. By the afternoon planting along the creek was complete and the hillside was swarming with people. As the sun went down the scene was truly inspiring: hundreds of people carrying buckets, planting, digging, laughing and smiling, music, the sound of hammers, silhouettes of mat-tocks against the sky and eagles and kites circling above.

An amazing effort was displayed by all involved and by the end of the day over 11,000 indigenous plants had gone into the ground. Some weary bodies went home to soak in a hot bath but many of the planters were energized by the day's activities and proceeded to the dance party held in South Melbourne that evening.

The scale of the project, committed attitudes and friendly atmosphere make Tranceplant a truly unique experience.



## More action on the Moonee Ponds Creek front .

The Moonee Ponds Creek – **Keep it Clean project** .  
 Keep it Clean project and Brunswick Secondary College have just been awarded a \$5,000 grant under the new Community Fix Up program developed by Coles and Clean Up Australia. The project is currently developing a Public Transport Litter Action Campaign with the Victorian Litter Action Alliance and M>Train & M>Tram .more on this later.

This is the first grant to be awarded under the Community Fix Up program, and was announced at the national launch of the scheme on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December. It will be used to fund a litter reduction and education campaign in Sydney Road, Brunswick.

Preparation is also under way for activities in the New Year including Clean Up Australia Events (with Business Clean Up on the 25<sup>th</sup> February, Schools Clean Up on 28<sup>th</sup> February and Clean Up Australia Day on 2<sup>nd</sup> March), and the re-launch of the Bag Yourself a Better Environment Campaign.

The Community Fix Up program is a small grant scheme run on a national basis through Coles supermarkets. The grants are awarded to projects with a community environmental theme (such as litter prevention education/ removal of rubbish from parks and recreation areas etc), and each Coles store is eligible to nominate a community group/school for a grant.

For further information, or to get involved please contact:

Nicolette Rose

Education & Promotion Coordinator

Moonee Ponds Creek – Keep it Clean Project

Ph: 03 9235 2112 Mob: 0404 862 523

E-Mail: [nicollette.rose@melbournewater.com.au](mailto:nicollette.rose@melbournewater.com.au)

**Other news from the Moonee Ponds Creek –**

## Summer Sightings

So what's budding, flowering or fruiting at this time of year? Not much, as many plants are shutting down for their summer dormancy period, even more so this year with the drought conditions. One plant you may see doing it's summer thing is *Viminaria juncea*, commonly known as Native Broom. It's weeping form and bright yellow pea flowers are it's most striking identifying features, and it's found close to the water along creek banks and wetlands. It's a fantastic reveg plant due to it's fast growing habit & tolerance of a wide range of conditions, not to mention it's pretty!

There are always birds to be seen along the creek and one that may be seen at this time of year in particular is the red browed firetail (or finch). This little bird is often seen in small flocks or families, it's flecks of red on it's brow & tail an identifying characteristic. It darts from shrub to shrub, preferring the shelter of prickly species such as the Hedge Wattle or Shrubby Tree Violet. This is one of the reasons why we plant so many 'pricklies' along the creek.

One exciting report of creeklife we have had received recently is from the crew of Bushland Recovery, who have been working in the West-meadows section of the creek. They have reported hearing the Pobble-bonk, Southern Brown Tree-Frog, Spotted Marsh-frog, Common Froglet and the regionally rare Growling Grass-frog.

If you have any interesting, rare or exciting sightings along the creek, please email us at [info@mpccc.org](mailto:info@mpccc.org). We now have a record keeping system to track flora & fauna changes along the creek.

## Upcoming Events

### Depot warming:

Join us in celebrating our big move to our new offices & depot at Woodlands Park, Oaklands Junction. Date: Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December 3pm onwards (see invite included)

### Totems project:

Moonee Valley City Council are embarking on another public arts project as part of the implementation of the Moonee Ponds Creek Public Arts Strategy. This exciting project aims to develop entrance totems for up to five entranceways in parks along the Moonee Ponds Creek. The works are due to be implemented by June 2003. For more information on this project, contact Patricia Keenan at Moonee Valley City Council on 9243 8840

### Autumn planting:

We are currently in the process of planning our Autumn planting season. If you have any suggestions for planting sites, or know of a group that are interested in planting along the creek, please contact us at [info@mpccc.org](mailto:info@mpccc.org) or on our office number 9333 2406